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Jordan

Economic, Political, Sociological and Educational  
Conditions

25X1A6a

25X1A2g

Jan thru Nov 52

Up to 52

25X1X6

1. "Since earliest antiquity the land now known as Jordan has been the stage for a succession of civilizations. The armies of Assyria and Persia came and conquered. The children of Israel passed through during their exodus from Egypt. Alexander repaid the visit of Darius to Greece and extended Greek influence far beyond this area. It was the battlefield of the Roman legions and their Byzantine successors. It served as the springboard of the Moslem conquest and was under the control of the Turks for over 400 years before the Arab revolt freed it from Ottoman rule in 1916.
2. "As the birthplace of Christianity and the cradle of Judaism, it provided the world with two monotheistic religions and the rise and development of the third-Islam took place in this area. Jerusalem, a part of which is now Jordan, has special sanctity in the eyes of all Moslems as the traditional stopping place of Mohammed on his celebrated nocturnal journey heavenward. The eye of the Christian, the Moslem and the Jew may always be turned to some sacred spot in Jordan for religious inspiration or objective.
3. "Notwithstanding the long history of the area the Kingdom of Jordan is today a young, immature and inexperienced country struggling for existence yet perhaps hopeful that it may find security and maintain existence as a part of Syria or Iraq. Transjordan - i.e., the land east of the Jordan River, following the revolt of the Arabs, was under the British Mandate from 1920 to 1946. The British in 1946 recognized Transjordan as an independent country and Abdullah as King. Then the British withdrew from neighboring Palestine and Transjordan's troubles began. While Abdullah pleaded for a peaceful solution of the Arab-Jewish problem, conflicts took place. Parts of Palestine were occupied by the Arab forces. In the spring of 1949 Transjordan and Israel signed an armistice agreement whereby Transjordan's control of central Palestine was conceded. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan came into existence as a constitutional monarchy.
4. "The new kingdom was not a place of peace and harmony. As an example, if the Palestinian Arab was anti-Israel in feeling, he was even more anti-British after the defeat; but Jordan and Abdullah depended on the British for financial aid and support - the expenses of the Arab Legion are paid by the British. Distrustful and dissident

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factions developed. Abdullah found it necessary to impose press censorship. Parliament had to be dissolved. Border conflicts continued with the new neighbor, Israel. Refugees were everywhere. Finally, on 20 July 1951, King Abdullah was murdered in Jerusalem. Although the causes are not known - the fanaticism, the distress of the refugees, the anti-Hashemite, anti-British and anti-Israel sentiments undoubtedly played their part in this dastardly act.

5. "King Talal succeeded his father. His illness, schizophrenia, is a political as well as personal tragedy at this time. A political tragedy because the West Bank, or the area formerly a part of Palestine, dislikes the Hashemite ruling house and Jordan can at this time ill afford internal discord and division of interest. But events were not to be stayed. In September 1951 with the consent of King Talal the constitution of Jordan was altered to provide that whether the sovereign is present or absent, Parliament could endow a Regency Council with sovereign powers. In May, 1952, Talal agreed to the creation of such a Council and departed to Europe for medical treatment leaving to his principal supporter, the Prime Minister, Tewfik Abdul Ruda, the responsibility of creating the Council. The Prime Minister, however, instead of creating the council assumed both the offices of Prime Minister and Regent. Considerable criticism resulted and on 4 June, after receiving reports of the condition of Talal, the Prime Minister established the Regency Council consisting of the Prime Minister, the President of the Senate, and two Senators - one from the West Bank, or old Palestine, and one from the old Transjordan area.
6. "Just prior to our arrival in Jordan the Regent of Iraq had been to Jordan to protest against the failure to include on the Council a member of the Hashemite family, as well as to urge again the union of the two countries. Despite Iraq's great wealth, the desert is a terrible barrier and union with Syria is considered by some to be more desirable, for Syria also has an expanding economy and both Jordan and Syria border Israel.
7. "The future independence of Jordan is today an open question. Certainly it is not a viable entity.
8. "The social and economic structure of the Kingdom is also complicated by the addition of part of former Palestine. The old Transjordan area east of the Jordan River is preponderantly tribal and approximately half of its population still adheres in some degree to the nomadic way of life. The agricultural basis is primarily pastoral. It is a poor country with no excess of land. In recent years it has suffered from droughts and in 1951 from a virtually complete loss of the wheat crop. It was having a hard time to reasonably support its population before the population was tripled. The facilities for education are meagre and health facilities under-developed. Little or no industry exists. There is a minimum of raw material and the possibilities of any industrial expansion in competition with the neighboring states are slim. In this part of Jordan no serious minority problems existed. However, with the tripling of the population through, first, the inclusion of part of the former Palestine, and secondly, the absorption of more than 450,000 refugees from other parts of Palestine, serious social and economic factors have been introduced.
9. "The inhabitants of the area absorbed from Palestine are small-town tradesmen, artisans, villagers, and white collar workers. This area of Palestine is poor agricultural land being for the most part hills from which the bare rocks protrude and expensive terracing is necessary if crops are to be grown. There is, of course, the unknown quantity of the west bank bordering the Jordan River and efforts are being made to bring water to this "dead land". The good land of Palestine is on the Israeli side. Also the normal avenues of trade between old Palestine and Transjordan are cut and the tourist dollars have about dried up. The old city of Jerusalem, which is in Jordan, is having a pitiful time.
10. "There is also a difference between the Palestinian Arab and the Transjordan Arab in education and experience. The Palestinian Arab absorbed into Jordan was quite well educated and with considerable experience. His influence on the national government has been felt to an extent that has incurred the ill-will of many of the

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east Jordanian Arabs. We detected a feeling of antipathy on the part of both the east of the Jordan River Arabs and the Palestinian Arabs toward each other. The Palestinian Arab in the future may be handicapped in his chances for good government positions. In fact, on several occasions we were told that the time may well come when Jordan - Jerusalem and Bethlehem included - may be a country without Christians.

11. "The US and Britain also are involved. The present unreal and almost untenable situation in this country, rightly or wrongly, is blamed upon the decisions made by the US and Britain.
12. "The attitude of the Arab against the Jew, contrary to the expectations of some, is not improving. There seems to be an ever-increasing determination on the part of the Arab to return to his homeland. Skirmishes across the border are continuous. The Arab who has lost his land to Israel and who sits on the rocky hillside overlooking it, is often forced by semi-starvation to slip across the frontier and steal the produce from his own land. When he is caught, wounds or death result.
13. "The refugee refuses resettlement either in Jordan or in the other Arab countries. Musa Alami, a Palestinian Arab, obtained a land concession on the west bank of the Jordan River from the government for the purpose of using it for resettlement of the refugees. He was successful in finding good water in the wells he drilled and the land responded with crops. Houses were constructed and every opportunity was given to the refugee to establish a new home, but with absolutely no success. The refugee is told by the politician that he is going to be returned to his home in Palestine and he is fearful of doing anything in the meantime which will separate him from his UNRWA ration. Musa Alami has turned his 'resettlement' farm into villages where boys and girls can be trained in vocational schools. UNRWA also must still look forward to the resettlement of its first refugee. In the meantime, the refugee is decaying in the camps and the flame of hatred burns ever more intensely.
14. "Many people see only the sad state of the refugees. Others deplore the poor health facilities. Educational facilities and teaching are far below any reasonable standard. Production programs as an activity of longterm contribution was the plan of several well-qualified advisors. UNRWA, as well as religious and charitable organizations, are doing much to relieve the basic requirements of the refugee and a little more would be helpful but would soon disappear.
15. "Arab National Hospital, Bethlehem  
In Bethlehem there is only one hospital, the Arab National Hospital. It operates almost on a shoestring. Last year the budget for this hospital which handled over 2,000 patients was little more than \$20,000, or an average of about \$10.00 per patient. The two doctors, both of whom were educated at the American University of Beirut, are carrying on their heroic work against almost impossible odds. One case, for example, was a boy in Bethlehem with TB of the bone but he could not be operated on until there was an X-ray picture. He would have to go to Jerusalem for this and weeks would pass before this was possible.
16. "The hospital has no X-ray equipment and the doctors are forced to operate in many cases without knowledge of what they will find. An X-ray machine and general hospital equipment of all kinds are badly needed.  
Education
17. "Palestine under the British Mandate had a good system of education. The addition of the central portion of Palestine to Jordan merged a well-developed with a poorly-developed educational system and the result was deterioration of both. Funds simply were not available to carry on a good system even with the best of good will and the help of the well-trained Palestinian Arabs. Also the Arab refugees have intensified the problem and while UNRWA has done much to increase the educational facilities in Jordan, many thousands of young people are still without school facilities.
18. "Ministry of Education  
The budget of the government of Jordan for education is severely limited and quite inadequate to cope with the demands for education. The Under-secretary for the Ministry of Education made a request for funds to supplement the laboratory equipment, provide visual aids, purchase books, provide school clinics, send students to colleges outside of Jordan and construct buildings.

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19. "The Point Four program is providing assistance to the Ministry in the development of two normal schools, one for the teaching of girls and one for the teaching of boys, and will assist the government in the establishment of a vocational school as well as a school to train village teachers. No provision, however, is made in the Point Four plans for equipment for laboratories or libraries. Such equipment is badly needed and can be used to supplement the Point Four aid.
20. "Bir-Zeit College  
This school is a private Arab institution run by an ex-Minister of Government, Mr. Musa ~~Basir~~. It was started about 20 years ago and has 200 boys and girls as students in its primary and secondary grades. It is located in a rural area. Its reputation and the reputation of the family running it are very good.
21. "The finances of the school are in extremely bad shape. Few contributions are being made to the school because of the bad economic conditions in Jordan. The School may have to close if financial assistance is not given before the next school year commences.
22. "Jordan is primarily an agricultural economy with little or no possibilities of any real industrial development. The level of income of its people is low and the standard of living marginal. Health conditions are poor and health facilities have not been developed. Knowledge of simple but sound agricultural practices is limited. Improvements in the management of the home, cooking, preservation of foods and better care of the family would add to the health and welfare of the people. Simple home industries could supplement family income. One approach to increasing productivity would be to organize a village development program. No village development programs are presently under way or contemplated except the possibility of the Development Bank of Jordan assisting in the creation of rural cooperatives.
23. "The American Friends Service Committee, represented in Jordan by Mr. Samuel B. Johnson, head of Mission, Middle East, is very much interested in undertaking a village development program but they need funds. Mr. Johnson has recommended to the Friends that money be raised for a terracing and village development project in the frontier villages. The principal objective of this project would be to make funds available to the owners of land, or economic refugees as they are known, to pay them for terracing their land.
24. "The advisability at this time of entering into a project having terracing as the primary objective is questionable. The crops to be grown on a terracing area would be olives which take from seven to twelve years to become productive and other fruits and vines which take from three to seven years to become productive. In the meantime, while some subsistence crops could be raised, the number of people who could be helped would be limited. Terracing is expensive.
25. "The British Agricultural advisor, Mr. J.C. Eyre, has written a report, "The Frontier Villages of Arab Palestine" and therein proposes that payments be made to the landowners along the frontier for terracing their own land, the payments to be made in the form of a loan. He says that the good land of these 'economic' refugees is across the border in Israel and they have kept only their hillside land and need funds to live on as they do the terracing work for UNRWA refuses to give the rations or treat them as refugees since they retain their homes.
26. "A village development program with general emphasis on increasing productivity, and health as well as simple education, and cottage industries should be the approach at this time.
27. "Vocational School for Boys and Girls - Jordan Valley  
The Arab Development Society was formed in 1945 with the objective of raising the social, economic, and educational standards of the Arab villages in Palestine. Musa Alami was the guiding spirit. The withdrawal of the British from Palestine and the troubles that followed caused the Society to consider a project to re-settle Arab Palestine refugees in the Jordan Valley. Permission to launch a re-settlement

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project was obtained from the government of Jordan and the government granted to the Society a tract of about 4,000 acres of land lying west of the Jordan River in the vicinity of Jericho. This was land officially registered as 'dead and waste' and considered by most everyone, including the former government of Palestine, as devoid of water resources and therefore uncultivable. Musa Alami, however, had wells dug and good supplies of water were found. With the water obtained from the wells, 300 acres of land were reclaimed and planted. One model village of 50 houses was constructed along with the other necessary facilities. Approximately 175 heads of families who were refugees were brought in to work on the land and about 25 families were settled in houses. The plan was to provide work and a basis for the refugee to obtain a portion of the land and a house to live in and thus attach his roots into a new community.

28. "The plan did not work. The refugee did not want to be resettled and give up his claim to return to Palestine; nor did he want to take any chance of the UNRWA taking away his food ration on the grounds that he was resettled. The official position of the government of Jordan is against resettlement. They encourage the refugee in his desire to return to Palestine.
29. "The plan of resettlement having failed, the Society determined to concentrate on the establishment of a vocational school or village for boys and one for girls. The original plan had included education for the school-age children. It is proposed that each village contain 250 students. They will be given moral and social training and taught village crafts, domestic, agricultural and mechanical skills. On the completion of their period of training they will be given the chance to settle on land provided by the Society.
30. "The project in the Jordan Valley took courage to start almost a thousand feet below sea level. It will take ability and determination to see it through to a point of success. Musa Alami has the reputation of a determined and resourceful person. He has the reputation of being wealthy and he has undoubtedly put some of his own money into the project. Contributions have been made from several sources including the government of Iraq. In the time we were in Jordan and because of the illness of Musa Alami we were not able to determine the present state of the finances for the project although his assistants stated that he needed funds. We do not know the extent of his ability or plans to finance the project or the possible returns coming from the crops grown on the reclaimed land. Nevertheless, it is a project which excites the imagination and if properly financed and administered could make a good contribution to the youth of the country."

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